Coexistence
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in the beginning & a little after for us made flesh
came nightmare a monster whose maw swallowed
us whole

not so all the other creatures stars & all who also
claimed to be as human as we & who in our coexistence

constituted the world nature universe we inhabit
coexistence being implicit & explicit universal
& particular

this was/is before the word was/is born to us
as coexistence in whose extremes lies the dilemma
a monster

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preceded by a nightmare & perhaps though all the other
creatures could share in the oneness of a nightmare not so
a monster

you ask what is part of you what is not part of you
on either side the wind reads the wind speaks
& you between are as porous as a labyrinth of echoes
whose core is terror whose core is exultancy

where you stand your back is pure loneliness

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your front is openness & closure a gestalt of becoming
where you ask what is part of you what is not part of you

beneath closed lids moments fly
in the orbit of the hour daubed
by moondrops in the inky darkness

tell me why tell me how on this blue
planet here in my satellite eye amidst

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the stars & their atoms on display

out of the maw of the whale
carrying the ocean in its belly comes
the dragon fire turning to molten gold

as clouds evaporate into crystals
the codes sealed beneath closed lids
as flesh that blinks in the dew

i look yonder through my garden door window
towards a twig spar trembling on high in the air

here a bird settles to perch swaying to & fro to
view

me through a single eye sitting in my armchair or so

it seems me whilst its other eye floats on the blue
floats its freedom at least more than ever i can be

after all the killing has been done will be done has
become with its spectral dead in their plaintiff innocence

our debt whose manacles now forge your doom
our tyranny which even as it topples falls on you

our as yet unborn who will be left behind to play upon
the stage with us your ghostly auditorium to applaud

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if you would weep for us O immortals
it would still be not enough for the tyranny
that claims our existence

& were i myself
able to touch in each
it still would not compensate
our state our fate

and you who would be beholden
to that goodness which contains it all
much has been said about love
to explain what is really real

the nature of consciousness
the nature of life the nature of existence
the nature of nature

where we cannot say there is no nature
but the nature of us
creatures amongst creatures lost to eternity

it is twilight

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the back of the earth slides towards stars
the sun slides to the other side
& in this dark corner of the earth
arises from sodden soil
a small dark cloud hovering mid air
a murky blur of energy
in burnished gold

more than a million midges attend this enrapture
that will evaporate within an hour into nothing
or at least to a space vacated
but do not approach with a hand thrust or a face
too near that would blister into pain
this hour does not attend our rote
it's been here before we even began
& after no doubt we're gone

a wave a particle a field but this is no
cybernetic cloud of simulated energy
a million midges commune an hour
in an indefinable reality
an indefinable time an indefinable infinite
if infinite at all
a brain a whole a part an impervious moment
beyond our reach our understanding...

& yet & yet kin

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The philosophy of war
is the power of the moment
the winner takes all
forget the unborn
they will be at war as well

Such is the triumph of tyranny
& the history of our species
but i pay homage to the dreamers
we who are not minions
but many movements
who will not fade away

we who in our beggar's rags
are scoffed at by the rich
who wave the banner of the demagogue
as though we did not exist
as if by might they could crush us
our words to dust

we who are manifest
in this green realm
our origin our becoming our embodiment
not as a visitation but a transmutation
where life holds us
in its abundant embrace

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rites of blood
sacraments on the altar of sacrifice
& the atrocities of life

the monster with its dripping fangs

we stare into each other's eyes
not as if it was to be found there
but that it's kept concealed in a secret lair

whilst we struggle on
with the pain & toil of strife
from the forces of starvation
& its creation

Where do we come from
What are we Where are we going

Gauguin on a tropical night paints
in pale luminous blue through silvery veils
supplicant bronzen women crouched
naked & reaching for fruit
in the background is a totem Goddess
a hue of wooden moonlit radiance
he wants her to come down but will she come
the painting ends his door is always open

but do not step out of the firelight
into the thousand eyes of the night

the lingering futility aftermath
to the finality of a bloody death
swept like wild fire on the waves of war
where we are helpless as it consumes
us all in its diseased passion
but to ultimately question the stance
what chance did we have what chance?

& round the corners of these streets
with their darting flights of birds
blinks the tinselled carnival
& so we follow laughter after tears
& so we live out all our years

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mouth
subject mouth object mouth north
south mouth lyric
mouth fictive mouth only today whatever
you say mouth mouth every age has its
epiphanies mouth every age epiphanies
mouth words in mouth in the hollow sky
mouth starvation overkill every age mouth
much has been said of mouth mouth
ages of epiphanies lips agape hole in the
face gap mouth in all in all in all in all a
kiss perhaps mouth to mouth a hole in the
face in the hollow sky overkill all the birds of
the air all the beasts of the ground of sea
mouth & the tiny tiny tiny much has been said
of mouth starvation overkill epiphanies
hidden revealed words much has been said
mouth north south bird beast starvation eat
eats eaten hidden & revealed in the
mouth mouth & your silence mouth what
of your silence mouth what of your secret
lips sealed like the serpent smile

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we coexist
as predator & prey
but do we really
when we who were the prey
mimicked made in the image of
& became the predator
& unleashed a monster
that devoured us in its
sacrifice
where we offer up
fresh meat to the GODS
sweet & sour

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worthy of earthly love
my love
let it not depart
the memory of it bereft
when I abandon the heart

After Quevado

16

soon the wild poppies will appear again
scrawny fibrous stems that flare in the fields
& hedgerows bright crimson petals centred
delicately with an eye of black humus

i've seen workmen on the street clutch
a fistful of stems so that the petals in their
brawny mits fanned out onto their hips
like fluttering butterflies in the sunshine

but their sojourn is brief they will appear
again in the derelict piece of scrub at the back
of a supermarket to proclaim their profusion
where stray cats will prowl through them

as a youth i'd boil them down in a large iron pot

on a wood stove pummelling them to a dark pitch
brick like substance that snapped when broken
& eat it in the fields until they blazed as crimson

After Mary Oliver

she had set up a daytime
camera roll below
a small hillside stream whose
embankment was lined with winter trees
to watch for otters

when like a film on a film
the ghosts came
shape filled forms hovering above
the rushing ice cold flow

coalescing in a mystery of costume
as if in an intense discourse
that was neither light nor dark
passionate perhaps but unassailable
careless of whether

we viewed them or not
or if they even knew
on this small strip of celluloid
that winter's day
when even the otters didn't come out to play

menstrual tide the moon’s ancestral hymn
entwined beneath the skin
overkill our covenant
the eternal process of predator and prey
each a mouth that feeds the divine
a tremor of memory written in the marrow
the fang the altar the knife
binds the child to ghosts of vanished kin
blood courses where war makes holiness wreathe
where cities breathe the stench of red
women and children put to the sword
the price of life feast of all the dead
a dark wine feeding our brief desire
a toast to the god that devours us
we Homo Sapiens who once were prey
to the beast without

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the scripture of blood has no scripture
it flows through us
in every wound every offering every pulse
as though an obsession with a vampire
with blood with birth with sacrifice
on the altar
the crimson tide within us all
blood like water we drink we bathe we swim in
the carnage of the carnivorous
the shadow of the predator in every gaze